

## COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES

The giraffe is the tallest of all living animals. The male may be anywhere from sixteen to twenty feet in height; and the female, only slightly shorter. The body proportions of the giraffe are somewhat peculiar. Although the front legs are from eight to ten feet in height and the neck as tall as a man, the body is somewhat smaller than the average horse's. The giraffe has seven vertebrae in his neck, just as man has. However, each vertebrae is quite long, making the neck very stiff. In order to drink, the giraffe has to spread his legs far apart to bend down. A valve in the giraffe's jugular vein closes when the head is down. This prevents blackouts and brain damage while this long-necked giant is getting a drink.

The tongue of the giraffe may be as long as one and a half feet. The upper lip is long. These two characteristics make it easy for the giraffe, with the aid of his long neck, to reach and wrench mouthfuls of leaves from the trees. The giraffe is good natured and gentle, but he will fight in self defense using his huge neck as a sledge hammer.



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1. This story is about:
  - (a) animals
  - (b) a giraffe
  - (c) description
  - (d) vertebrae
2. What is the height of the male?
  - (a) 16 to 20 feet
  - (b) 25 feet
  - (c) 12 feet
  - (d) 8 to 10 feet
3. The neck size is compared to a:
  - (a) tree
  - (b) horse
  - (c) man
  - (d) hammer
4. What part of the body does the animal use for defense?
  - (a) leg
  - (b) neck
  - (c) mouth
  - (d) entire body
5. As a result of long vertebrae in the neck:
  - (a) the neck is stiff
  - (b) spreading of the legs is necessary to bend
  - (c) eating from trees is easy
  - (d) the upper lip is long
6. Wrench means:
  - (a) stretch
  - (b) eat
  - (c) pull
  - (d) enjoy
7. While drinking, the giraffe must look:
  - (a) graceful
  - (b) comfortable
  - (c) like a horse
  - (d) awkward
8. Although man and the giraffe have seven vertebrae each, they must:
  - (a) have the same problems
  - (b) vary in length
  - (c) be peculiar
  - (d) have blackouts